

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LISBON 05106 031456Z

53

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TAGS: SOPN, PINT, PO

SUBJ: PORTUGUESE MEDIA SHOWS GREATER INDEPENDENCE

SUMMARY: PORTUGUESE NEWSPAPERS AND RADIO STATIONS, EVEN THOSE WHICH ARE EITHER CONTROLLED OR INFLUENCED BY GOP, RECENTLY HAVE SHOWN AN INDEPENDENCE IN CRITICIZING THE REGIME AND INDIVIDUALS WITHIN IT TO A DEGREE UNTHINKABLE TWO MONTHS AGO. END SUMMARY.

1. MEDIA CRITICISM: DURING THE PAST WEEK OR TWO, MEDIA CRITICISM OF THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT AND REPORTING OF ACTIVITIES AND OPINIONS OF OPPOSITION LEADERS HAS INCREASED STEADILY AND TO A LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 02 LISBON 05106 031456Z

DEGREE WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN EXTREMELY IMPRUDEN DURING THE

EARLIER DAYS OF THE REVOLUTION. MUCH OF THE SNIPING HAS BEEN DIRECTED AGAINST PRIME MINISTER VASCO GONCALVES AND AT OTHER MINISTERS OF HIS GOVERNMENT. OVER THE PAST WEEKEND, THERE ALSO WAS CONSIDERABLE REPORTING OF OPPOSITION WITHIN AND WITHOUT THE ARMED FORCES OF THE FORMATION OF A NEW GOVERNMENT BY ADMIRAL PINHEIRO DE AZEVEDO.

2. STATE OF PLAY IN LISBON NEWSPAPERS: IN TODAY'S HIGHLY POLITICIZED PORTUGAL, PAPERS FALL INTO THREE BASIC, IF ILL-DEFINED CAMPS:

(A) PAPERS THE GOP ACQUIRED WHEN IT NATIONALIZED BANKS AND PROPERTIES THE BANKS OWNED. THESE PAPERS--"DIARIO DE NOTICIAS," "O SECULO," AND "DIARIO DELISBOA"--ARE UNDER VARYING DEGREES OF COMMUNIST CONTROL AND HAVE SUPPORTED THE REGIME. INDIVIDUALLY, THEY GIVE SOME PLAY TO OPPOSITION NEWS, ALTHOUGH THEY PREFER TO "BURY" IT INSIDE AND USE IT IN ABBREVIATED FORM. EDITORIAL STAFF MEMBERS BY NOW ARE MOSTLY COMMUNISTS, ALTHOUGH A FEW OTHER LEFTISTS ARE STILL WRITING.

(B) INDEPENDENT LEFTIST PAPERS, SUCH AS "DIARIO POPULAR" AND "A CAPITAL" WHICH BASICALLY SUPPORT THE REVOLUTION BUT NOT NECESSARILY THE COMMUNIST PARTY. EDITORIAL STAFFS REPRESENT A BROAD SPECTRUM OF LEFTISTS--RANGING FROM SOCIALISTS TO COMMUNISTS TO MAOISTS.

(C) DAILIES AND SOME IMPORTANT WEEKLIES WHICH FAVOR THE REVOLUTION, BUT STRONGLY OPPOSE THE INFLUENCE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY. THESE INCLUDE "JORNAL NOVO," "A LUTA," "EXPRESSO," "O JORNAL," AND "TEMPO". STAFFS INCLUDE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE SOCIALISTS, THE PPD, AND A SPRINKLING OF OTHER INDEPENDENT LEFTISTS--WITH EVEN AN OCCASIONAL SO-CALLED "RIGHTIST" ON SUCH A PAPER AS "EXPRESSO". SOME SAMPLES OF THE INCREASINGLY "INDEPENDENT" COVERAGE IN THIS PRESS SITUATION:

3. OFFICIAL RADIO COMPLAINS ABOUT LACK OF INFORMATION:

SEPT. 1 AND 2 NEWSCASTS BY GOVERNMENT'S EMISSORA NACIONAL COMPLAINED ABOUT LACK OF PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY THE NEWLY DESIGNATED PRIME MINISTER, PINHEIRO DE AZEVEDO. ON SEPT. 1, NEWSCASTER REMARKED SARCASTICALLY THAT HE WOULD GIVE NEWS ABOUT THE NEW GOVERNMENT IF HE HAD ANY, BUT UNFORTUNATELY THE PRIME MINISTER SO FAR HAD MADE NO STATEMENTS. ON SEPT. 2, NEWSCASTER PREFACED BRIEF STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER BY SAYING. "AT LAST WE HAVE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 LISBON 05106 031456Z

A WORD FROM THE NEW GOVERNMENT."

4. PRESIDENCY'S "CLOSED DOOR" POLICY; NEWSPAPERS OF A VARIETY OF MODERATE AND LEFTISTS TENDENCIES HAVE BEGUN PUBLISHING COMPLAINTS ABOUT A LACK OF COOPERATION AND OPENNESS IN THE PRESIDENTIAL PRESS OFFICE. INDEPENDENT LEFTIST "DIARIO POPULAR" OF AUG. 30 CARRIED COLUMN CRITICAL OF PHYSICAL REMOVAL OF PRESS FROM FORMERLY PUBLIC AREAS OF THE PRESIDENCY AND LACK OF NEWS FROM

OFFICIAL SPOKESMAN. WRITER SAYS THAT IN OTHER COUNTRIES THE PRESIDENCY GENERATES NEWS AND COMMUNICATION "WITH THE MASSES"; IN PORTUGAL TODAY, HE SAYS, "...WE KNOW NOTHING, WHICH IS WORSE. MUCH WORSE. IT SEEMS THAT SOMETHING IS BEING HIDDEN, THAT SOMETHING IS BEING DONE BEHIND THE BACK OF THE PEOPLE."

5. DIRECT ATTACKS ON PRIME MINISTER: AMONG THOSE PAPERS WHICH OPPOSE PRESENT REGIME, WEEKLY MODERATE SOCIALIST "O TEMPO" WAS AMONG THOSE MOST VOCIFEROUS IN ATTACKING VASCO GONCALVES WHILE HE WAS PRIME MINISTER: THREE ARTICLES IN PAPER'S AUG 28 ISSUE WERE ANTI-VASCO GONCALVES. THEY (1) DETAILED REAL ESTATE AND OTHER INVESTMENT HOLDINGS BY PRIME MINISTER WHICH PAPER SAID MAKES HIM A RICH MAN AND A MEMBER OF THE "CAPITALIST BOURGEOIS", (2) INCLUDED REPRINT OF A LETTER-PRESUMABLY AUTHENTIC-FROM COPCON COMMANDER OTELO SARIVA DE CARVALHO TO VASCO GONCALVES IN WHICH HE IRONICALLY ASKED THE PRIME MINISTER TO STEP DOWN AND OUT "I ASK YOU TO REST UP, TAKE THINGS EASY, CALM DOWN, MEDITATE AND READ..." (3) AND INCLUDED COLUMN BY WELL-KNOWN WRITER VERA LAGOA WHICH AGGRESSIVELY CONCLUDED WITH THIS DEMAND TO VASCO GONCALVES: "GET OUT*" ALSO, SOCIALIST "A LUTA" OF SEPT. 1 PUBLISHED ARTICLE ON WHO IS WHO AMONG VASCO GONCALVES' FRIENDS AND ENEMIES-SAYING THAT PAPER IS FIRMLY IN SECOND CAMP: "...WE OURSELVES HAVE NOT SHOWN ANY PARTICULAR SYMPATHY FOR THE POSITIONS OF THE EX-CHIEF OF GOVERNMENT NOR FOR GONCALVES-ISM IN A GENERAL..."

6. GENERAL ATTACKS ON REGIME: "A LUTA" COLUMN OF AUG. 27 CAUTIONS. "NO GOVERNMENT CAN CALL ITSELF REPRESENTATIVE WHEN THE PEOPLE STOP BELIEVES IN IT."

7. PUBLICATION OF COMMUNIQUE OPPOSING NEW GOVERNMENT: MOST NEWSPAPERS PUBLISHED ON SEPT. 1 OR 2 COMMUNIQUE TEXT BY AIR FORCE CHIEF OF STAFF, GENERAL MORAIS DA SILVA, IN WHICH THE GENERAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 04 LISBON 05106 031456Z

CATEGORICALLY REJECTS THE NOMINATION OF VASCO GONCALVES AS ARMED FORCES COMMANDER AND ANNOUNCES HIS ADHERENCE TO THE PROGRAM OF THE "GROUP OF NINE." LAST ITEM OF TEN IN HIS COMMUNIQUE STATES: "A REVOLUTION BY 80 PERCENT OF THE PORTUGUESE CANNOT BE TRANSFORMED INTO A DICTATORSHIP BY 20 PERCENT OF THE PORTUGUESE OVER THE OTHERS. THE NOMINATION IN POINT ESTABLISHES CONDITIONS TO MAKE POSSIBLE SUCH A DICTATORSHIP OF A MINORITY, WHICH WOULD DIRECTLY CONTRAVENE THE REASONS FOR THE APRIL 25 MOVEMENT."

8. PRESS FREEDOM DEMANDS: THE NON-COMMUNIST LEFTIST PRESS HAS A CONTINUING CAMPAIGN AGAINST EFFORTS OF THE REGIME TO PRESSURE THE MEDIA--PARTICULARLY AGAINST A DRAFT PRESS PROGRAM WHICH WAS PUSHED BY MINISTER OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATIONS JESUINO, WHO REPUTEDLY WILL BE "RETIRED" BY THE PINHEIRO DE AZEVEDO GOVERNMENT.

A "A LUTA" AUG. 27 ARTICLE LEAD OPPOSED JESUINO PLAN SAYING THAT
"THE ANTI-FASCIST JOURNALISTS DO NOTHING MORE THAN REAFFIRM NOW
AS IN THE PAST THEIR REJECTION OF ALL FORMS OF CENSORSHIP,
FROM WHATEVER SOURCE, WHICH MAY HOLD WHATEVER "POLITICAL"
VIEWPOINTS." ("ANTI-FASCISTS" IN THIS CONTEXT COVERS
JOURNALISTS OF MANY POLITICAL STRIPES.)

9. COMMENT: IN THESE AND OTHER EXAMPLES OF THE FREE-SWINGING
STYLE OF PORTUGUESE MEDIA TODAY--IN WHICH EACH ORGAN
CONTINUES BASICALLY TO SUPPORT A POLITICAL VIEWPOINT--ONE FINDS
A GROWING ASSERTIVENESS. THIS BOLDNESS (1) INDICATES THAT GOP
EFFORTS TO "BRING
THE MEDIA INTO LINE" HAVE NOT HAVE ANY REAL TEETH SO FAR,
AND THIS HAS BECOME AMPLY CLEAR DURING THE PAST TWO
WEEKS, AND (2) SERVES TO KEEP PUBLIC THE SO-CALLED "MODERATE"
ANTI-REGIME POLITICAL VIEWPOINTS, IN AN EVER-
CHANGING SITUATION WHERE THE "INS" HAVE MANY ADVANTAGES GOING
FOR THEM--BUT THEY DO NOT, AT LEAST, CONTROL ALL THE MEDIA.
UNTIL A STRONG, STABLE GOVERNMENT IS FORMED AND IS ABLE TO
CONSOLIDATE POTENTIAL CONTROL MECHANISMS, THE LISBON PRESS
APPARENTLY WILL MAINTAIN ITS PRESENT LIVELY HABITS. THE FIRST
PAPERS WHICH WOULD LOSE THEIR "FREEDOM" UNDER SUCH A GOVERNMENT
IRONICALLY WOULD BE THOSE OWNED BY THE GOP AND WHICH RECENTLY
HAVE EXERCISED A SOMEWHAT MORE FREE-WHEELING APPROACH--
AND INDEPENDENT--THAN NORMALLY OCCURS WHEN BEING GOVERNMENT-OWNED
ALSO MEANS BEING GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED.
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